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ON THE SUBJECT OF
CURING AND PACKING
BEEF AND PORK;

IN CONFORMITY WITH THE SYSTEM OF INSPECTION OF

LOWER CANADA.

By WILLIAM MOORE,
INSPECTOR OF BEEF AND PORK FOR THE CITY AND
DISTRICT OF MONTREAL.

MONTREAL:
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Muir's Buildings, Place D'Armes.
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INTRODUCTION.

THE remarks and explanations contained in this Circular are more particularly addressed to the notice of Merchants and others of Upper Canada; from whence the Lower Province may naturally look for and expect at no distant period, to receive an ample supply of those indispensable articles, both for the purposes of Commerce and Domestic consumption.

MONTREAL:

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1838.

REMARKS.

THE interior situation of Upper Canada renders it necessary to deposit its produce, intended for foreign markets, at the head of ship navigation in Lower Canada; where, preparatory for sale or exportation, a designation of character becomes necessary, and is officially given, in accordance with the laws and customs of the Province; and in this manner the produce of the Upper, becomes identified as the production of Lower Canada; and as such is known in foreign markets. It is therefore very important to the interest of this Province, to maintain and support a good and uniform character to its export commodities. And as respects the articles under consideration, Beef and Pork, a uniformity or parity in character can be maintained, *only by an uniform treatment at the commencement of operation.* To facilitate this desirable object, the writer is induced to give such advice and instruction, as, from the result of a long experience, he is enabled to do.

I have presumed to address these remarks more particularly to the consideration of those who may be interested in the Upper Province, being induced to do so in consequence of the ruinous state in which too large a proportion of their provision has been found the present season. Of that received in the month of June, fully one-tenth was damaged; and of that re-

ceived during the months of July and August, more or less of almost every lot has proved defective ; and not less than one-fourth of all that has passed Inspection proved unmerchantable. In this place it may prove both satisfactory and useful, to point out the defects and omissions in the treatment that have led to these unfavourable results.

While I am bound to approve the course of many gentlemen of the Upper Province, in the uniform and creditable manner of treatment, and sound condition in which their Pork has always been received ; we take leave to complain, that for the last two or three years the Pork received from some sections of the Upper country, and even from the seat of Government, is cut in a very irregular manner. We have received some lots of Pork cut in pieces of ten, twenty, thirty, and even forty pounds weight, with the ears, snout, tail, legs and feet attached ; other parcels in pieces and strips of one, two, and three pounds each. Pieces of less than four pounds cannot be lawfully branded ; and, when too large, cannot be re-cut to retain the proper shape and weight.

We have to complain of the size of barrels from some parts of the Upper country, being either too large or too small ; and in some instances are made of unseasoned timber, in others defective in workmanship, and deficient in hoops. Some of these defects tend to the loss of pickle, when the contents become rusty, and unmerchantable ; but the most ruinous consequences have resulted from the deficiency, or too parsimonious application of salt. When no salt remains to feed and support the pickle, it becomes acid, and often putrid, rendering the provision unmerchantable, sour, and frequently tainted ; in the latter case, of little or

no use but for the soap-boiler. Some lots of Pork have been materially injured, and nearly ruined, by reason of a too abundant use of saltpetre, or some other ingredient producing a rust and an offensive smell. Many have erred in cutting the leg, or shank, from the shoulder, and also from the ham; as when so separated, are too small and cannot be branded; of course are separately packed and sold for cuttings. Thus it appears that great sacrifices have resulted, chiefly from the deficiency of the barrels, and withholding the necessary supply of salt to ensure preservation; and, therefore, all who may hereafter incline to adventure in packing Beef and Pork, are forewarned of the necessity of providing good and sufficient barrels, and an ample supply of good and pure salt. There is no salt preferable for curing provision, to that of New York. A proportion of coarse salt may be used in packing, one peck to the barrel, when conveniently to be obtained.

The lawful size of the barrel, for packing beef, is twenty-nine gallons; for pork, thirty gallons, wine measure; and are required to be made of good and well-seasoned white oak, or white ash timber. Staves twenty-eight and a half inches in length, in thickness half an inch; heading, eighteen inches in length, and three-fourths of an inch in thickness; each barrel to be two-thirds of the length covered with good white oak, ash, or hickory hoops, leaving one-third of the centre uncovered, and bored in the centre of the bilge with a bit of one inch diameter, for the reception of pickle, and must never be bored and pickled at the head.

By law and practice, four grades of pork are packed and branded for exportation in Lower Canada, namely: Mess, Prime Mess, Prime and Cargo, two hundred pounds to the barrel.

MESS PORK

Is made from side-pieces of good fat hogs, weighing two hundred and fifty pounds to the carcase and upwards, taken from the shoulder to the hips, casting off the flank.

PRIME MESS PORK

Consists of one carcase to the barrel, (a carcase of pork weighing two hundred and twenty-seven or two hundred and twenty-eight pounds, the lard and trimmings off, makes a barrel) ; but we are accustomed to pack good fat hogs weighing from two hundred to two hundred and fifty pounds the carcase, as Prime Mess, observing when it be too heavy for a barrel to take from it, and add to the small ones, always retaining the coarse parts only of one hog to the barrel.

PRIME PORK

Is packed from good fat hogs, ranging from 160 to 200 lbs. the carcase, and consists of one and a half hog to the barrel ; but in no case of more than the coarse parts of three half hogs, and the weight made up of side pieces. Prime Pork is also packed from the remaining parts of carcasses from which Mess has been selected ; but to consist of no more of the coarse parts than when packed from small hogs.

CARCO PORK

Is made of smaller hogs ; but must not consist of more than the coarse parts of two carcasses, and not packed from carcasses of less than one hundred pounds weight. And, in some instances where the hams and shoulders are not packed, and there being a surplus of side Pork, too thin for Mess, we are accustomed to pack it as Thin Mess, for which we have no brand, but is convenient for home consumption.

From this explanation of the size and quality suitable

to each grade, the operator may be at no great loss to make his selection of carcasses for either. In Ireland, and on the continent of Europe, Pork is cut for packing, into pieces of four pounds weight. Beef into pieces of eight pounds weight. Both are cured before packing. The former packed fifty pieces to the barrel, the latter, twenty-five, of various qualities, to suit the Army and Navy, and for the East and West India markets. In the State of New York, and some other of the United States, the carcass is split through the centre of the back the whole length of the hog, the sides or halves are cut cross-ways into pieces of five or six inches in breadth, the shoulders and hams are packed with the side-pieces without further cutting; but the manner of cutting and treatment, as practised in this Province, is somewhat different from either the European, or that of the States. That is, we cut into pieces to average from five to six pounds, and not less than four, or over eight, which is approved as more convenient and satisfactory to the consumer than the European manner, and tends to a safer preservation than that of the States. A spacious block and cleaver are necessary, in order to cut the meat smooth, square, and in a suitable manner, as the character of our inspection is in a great measure maintained by the uniformity in shape, size and weight of the pieces. I shall endeavour to give a particular description of the manner of cutting a carcass of Pork, in conformity to our standard. To commence the process, place the carcass upon the block, separate the head from the body, close back of the ears, the snout and under jaw close above the tusks, the ears from the head. the head through the centre of the brain, and the brain cast out, each half of the head checked or separated at the joint of the jaw, according

to the weight of the head ; next separate the neck from the body, close to the point of the shoulder, which cut into two or three pieces, according to weight, proceed by separating the shoulders, cutting through the body, in breadth five or six inches ; turn up the shoulders, separating at the centre, making two or three pieces of each shoulder, according to weight, cutting off the legs close above the knee-joints. This done, separate the hams from the body at the hip-bone ; the hams spread, separate each from the other, cutting close to the crotch-bone, leaving a tail-piece of five or six pounds weight, each ham cut into two or three pieces, according to weight, and the legs close above the gambrel joint. The next and last process is to turn the body open side up, cutting through at the centre of the back, when each side is cut through length-ways, cross-cutting each part into pieces of from five to six pounds weight.

The Pork being cut and prepared for packing, if packed from the block for exportation, the law requires that each barrel should be salted with seventy-five pounds of good, pure salt, St. Ubes, Lisbon, Isle of May, or Turk's Island, exclusive of pickle as strong as salt will make it. But when packed in the autumn or winter to be repacked at the opening of the ensuing spring, not less than one barrel of Onondaga salt, or the salt of the same weight and purity, is required for every five barrels of Pork for packing and pickle ; to which add three ounces of saltpetre for each barrel. The process of packing into barrels is very simple, after spreading a layer of salt over the bottom of the barrel, place the pieces side by side edge-ways, as close as may be, and a layer of salt between each layer of Pork, until the barrel is filled, selecting the best pieces for

the top, or show head; and as soon as Pork is packed and headed, should be pickled with the pickle as strong as salt can make it; and, when bunged, shall remain on the bilge, or, if piled, with the bung upwards.

It may not be improper here to remark, that neither Beef or Pork should be packed until the animal heat has fully passed off, neither should it be packed in a frozen state, as in either case damage will ensue. Butchers should be cautioned always to suffer carcasses, whether Beef or Pork, to hang with the open part spread until the animal heat becomes extinct. Beef or Pork in a frozen state should be gradually thawed before salting, in a stove-room, or warm cellar. Beef frozen in the carcass is nearly ruined for salting, and should never be packed for exportation.

Having concluded my remarks relating to Pork, I shall proceed to explain the system of Packing, and treatment of Beef, so far as differing from that already given as applying to Beef and Pork. The proportion of Beef received from the Upper country during the present year, is to that of Pork comparatively small, and has alike proved irregular in the manner of cutting, and in a defective state of preservation. These are material errors, and can be rectified only by a regular and uniform process in conformity to our system. And unless first obtaining this information, it is useless to adventure in this business.

There are four qualities or grades of Beef packed for exportation: Mess, Prime Mess, Prime and Cargo; to be packed two hundred pounds to the barrel. All Beef so packed should be of good fat cattle, three years old and upwards, oxen, cows, and steers; and should be cut into pieces, as nearly equal as may be, of six pounds weight, and not less than four, or over

sight, assorted and packed of the different qualities according to law. That is to say, Mess Beef shall consist of choice pieces, namely, briskets, ribs, sirloins, rumps, and flanks, of the first quality of cattle. Prime Mess Beef should consist of good fat cattle of the second class, packed without shank or neck. Prime Beef should be packed from good fat cattle and may consist of half a carcase to the barrel, including the neck and shank. Cargé Beef should consist of good fat cattle of all description, of three years old and upwards, with not more than half a neck or three shanks to the barrel.

There is but one way and manner to cut Beef, so as to maintain a uniform shape, and an average weight of the pieces, in accordance with the standard. To write out a description of the process to be clearly understood, is difficult; although a man standing by, and seeing but one side of Beef cut, would have no difficulty thereafter to proceed in a regular manner. To proceed in cutting, place the fore-quarter on the block, *inside* down; first separate the joint of the neck at the first joint, which is cut off the neck near the point of the shoulder, which cut into two or three pieces, conforming to the weight; next, cutting the quarter through length-ways, commencing at the point of the shoulder bone ranging with the back to the opposite end of the quarter, leaving the back, at the end, seven or eight inches in breadth, which cross-cut into pieces of the average weight; proceed by separating the shoulder from the brisket and ribs, cut and cast off the hock, the shank from the shoulder below the joint, the shoulder into two or three pieces, according to size and weight. This done, cut through the remaining part, length-ways, ranging with the brisket, leaving this part seven or

eight inches in breadth ; both the brisket and ribs cut into pieces as near square as possible, of the standard weight.

The hind-quarter being placed on the block, *outside* down, which cut through lengthways, leaving the back half about eight inches in breadth, cutting close to the crotch-bone, which back half cut into pieces of the average weight ; next separate the flank from the leg or thigh, leaving the flank entire for the cap or head piece of the barrel ; cut off the hook from the shank ; the shank near the first joint of the thigh ; the thigh, or round, into pieces not exceeding eight pounds weight. Whoever may direct the cutting and packing of the Beef, will necessarily exercise his judgment in selecting the carcasses suitable to each grade, and always cutting a side for each barrel, to which add or take from, according to the weight. Beef, as Pork, should be packed edge-ways in the barrel ; and the same directions as given for packing Pork will be observed in packing Beef, applying to each barrel four ounces of saltpetre ; and when packed from the block for exportation, it must be salted with the same quantity and quality of salt, as directed for Pork ; but when barreled to be re-packed, the same quantity of salt as directed for Pork will be sufficient, if re-salted during the spring months ; but if remaining longer, more salt will be necessary. In all cases it should be pickled immediately after being packed, with pickle as strong as salt can make it, and should remain on the bilge, and, if piled, bung upwards. In no case should Beef or Pork be pickled at the head.

It is probable that many of those who are dealers in Pork, are not fully aware of the operation of salt upon it, as respects the increase or decrease of weight being

in proportion to the quality of the Pork. That made from the best qualities of grain, Indian corn, peas, and oats, packed at the usual season, 200 lbs. to the barrel, and re-packed and pickled with pickle strong as salt will make it, will increase in weight five or six per cent. Pork made from soft grain and roots, will gain little, if anything, in weight under the operation of salt. Pork made at distilleries will always decrease in weight by the operation of salt. Much of this description is soft and unworthy of the brand, unless improved by hard feed. And it should be understood that all Pork, however good the quality, *will decrease in weight* during the summer heat, and will gradually do so until the close of the hot season, especially when transported and exposed to the heated atmosphere. Pork will always run short of the original weight when found destitute of pickle. This generally occurs from some defect in the barrel—a loss of from three to six per cent. to the owner—and the evil of defective barrels does not end with the owner of the provision, but extends to the inconvenience, expense, and loss of reputation to the Inspector, if he is so unfortunate as to pass over unnoticed any defects that prove to the injury of the provision, and tends to the disrepute of the provision of our country.

Ample directions are given for the lawful and sufficient barrel; and should our friends from the Upper country in future neglect to conform to the information given, they will have no cause to complain if all unlawful barrels are condemned in this market.

FINIS.

